



RAF pilot makes history

First foreign officer flies B-2 Spirit Bomber

By Senior Airman Joe Lacdan
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. — Royal Air Force pilot David Arthurton was greeted by a champagne shower after his first B-2 Spirit Bomber flight June 9.

The flight lieutenant (equivalent of a U.S. captain) flew the Spirit of Pennsylvania about 1,700 miles during the 4.5-hour flight, becoming the only foreign pilot to fly the bomber.

"My first B-2 sortie

was a fantastic experience," said Flt. Lt. Arthurton, a 394th Combat Training Squadron member. "It was great to put the months of training and hard work into practice."

He credited maintainers and crew chiefs for their support in a successful takeoff.

After an air refueling the flight lieutenant and instructor pilot Lt. Col. Dave Anderson, 394th CTS, returned to Whiteman to practice landing procedures.

"Once airborne, things went as planned," said the Norwich, England, native. "The hours of training in the simulator really kicked in."

Flt. Lieutenant Arthurton

● See **RAF**, page 3



Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Padden

Royal Air Force pilot David Arthurton is all smiles after completing his first B-2 flight in the Spirit of Pennsylvania. The flight lieutenant (U.S. captain equivalent) is the first foreign pilot to fly a B-2 Spirit bomber June 9.

Minot B-52 aids ground troops under fire

By Master Sgt. Rich Romero
40th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (AFPN) — A B-52 Stratofortress from the 40th Air Expeditionary Group dropped three joint-direct attack munitions recently on a cave of anti-coalition forces in Afghanistan, killing two and leading to the capture of 10 others by coalition ground forces.

The mission was one of 22 close-

air support and armed reconnaissance sorties flown that day by coalition aircraft.

Supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, the B-52 was providing close-air support in the Oruzgan Province. Coalition troops came under small arms fire, and the B-52 responded, officials said.

"It felt really good when we heard that the bomb hit the cave dead on and closed all three entrances," said the

mission lead about the sortie that dropped the munitions.

He also said it took every bit of experience and training on the part of the crew.

"We were swapping information with a combined team of maintenance, weapons and operations experts at this forward-operating location," the lieutenant colonel said. "We were also talk-

● See **TROOPS**, page 3

Honor those who stood for freedom

By Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson
8th Air Force commander

In 1776, a small group of British colonists bravely stood up against the most powerful empire in the world and said "No" to the tyranny of a distant monarchy.

In declaring independence from Great Britain, they risked losing everything they had worked for; their homes, their businesses, even their lives. They preferred the prospect of death in a struggle for liberty over a life of enslavement to a foreign government.

They stood up for freedom and democracy, and changed the world in the process. We honor their

commitment to liberty and their contribution in making America truly the "land of the free and home of the brave."

In the 229 years since then many have also taken that stand, but not without sacrifice. Many before us have paid with their lives so we could enjoy the liberties we have today. Many of the "Mighty Eighth" family are among those who championed democracy.

Now is the time to salute those brave patriots. This holiday is not just about barbecues, flags or fire-

works; it's also about remembering those who gave of themselves so we can live in a free society. It's

about recommitting ourselves to the values of our country's forefathers and the spirit of our great nation.

Each generation has a responsibility to remember and to carry the torch of freedom to the next generation. Today, members of the "Mighty Eighth" are working together for the cause of freedom, both at home stations and on deployments across the globe.

Your nation owes you its

gratitude and unwavering support. Freedom does come with a price, and it is evident by your actions that you have paid that price in defending our nation's liberty and independence.

So on this most American of holidays, let us not only celebrate the liberty we enjoy as Americans, let us also celebrate those who defend them. May we always remember the heroes who have gone before and the heroes who still stand watch today. I thank you and your families for your outstanding service in defense of America's freedom.

God bless our great nation!



Sleepy drivers cause more than 100,000 crashes

By Rod Krause
5th Bomb Wing Ground Safety Office

Are you getting enough sleep?

According to studies by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, many drivers aren't and the results can be fatal.

The NHTSA estimates that approximately 100,000 police-reported crashes annually involve drowsiness or fatigue as a principal factor. Those crashes result in an estimated 1,500 fatalities and 71,000 injuries each year.

Referred to as the silent killer

because it's so often overlooked as the cause of an accident, the full effects of drowsy driving are not known because reporting is imprecise. Police are not trained to detect sleep-related crashes, and there's no breathalyzer-like test to determine whether someone was driving while dangerously drowsy.

According to a Farmer Insurance survey, almost three times as many men as women said they have fallen asleep while driving.

While 53.4 percent of all surveyed said they have felt drowsy while driving, 41.2 percent claimed

they kept driving.

The American Institute of Chartered Personal Casualty Underwriters insists "stay awake" behaviors such as exercising, turning on the radio and opening the window are misconceptions and haven't been proven to prevent sleep attacks.

Experts who have looked at the problem say the only safe way to combat drowsy driving is to pull over to a safe parking spot and take a 20-minute nap. Then drive to the closest safe resting spot such as a motel or a friend's house and sleep.

The "Mighty Eighth" Voice

Editorial content of The **Mighty Eighth Voice** is edited, prepared and provided by the 8th Air Force Public Affairs office, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. All photographs are official Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated. The contents of The **Mighty Eighth Voice** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force. The **Mighty Eighth Voice** is a monthly publication. People may submit suggestions for stories by calling Tech. Sgt. Jeff Loftin in the Public Affairs Office room 150, or call (318) 456-2892 or DSN 781-2892.



Eighth Air Force Commander
Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson

Chief, Public Affairs
Capt. Carla Pampe
carla.pampe@barksdale.af.mil

Editor
Tech. Sgt. Jeff Loftin
NCOIC, Public Affairs
jeffery.loftin@barksdale.af.mil

● **RAF, from page 1**

and Colonel Anderson, received congratulations from Maj. Keith Reeves, 394th CTS, Col. Curtiss Petrek, 509th Operations Group commander, fellow pilots and his wife, Poppy.

“It is a real honor to be the first non-U.S. pilot to undertake training in the stealth bomber,” said Flt. Lieutenant Arthurton.

Since arriving here in October 2004, the RAF pi-

lot completed T-38 training in January.

He notes that flying the B-2 will be quite a change for him.

Previously, Flt. Lieutenant Arthurton flew the

Tornado GR4 fighter jet, an aircraft that used low-level laser guided bombs.

Flt. Lieutenant Arthurton flew 25 combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

● **TROOPS, from page 1**

ing with Army and Air Force ground troops who were giving us targeting information. Thanks to the efforts of a team spread across 3,000 miles, we put bombs on target.”

For one young Airman deployed from Minot Air Force Base, N.D., it was his first experience of seeing a bomber return after dropping live munitions, and one he said he will never forget. He has been in the Air Force 18 months.

“I didn’t actually believe it until I saw it,” said Airman 1st Class Marcus Thames, a weapons loader on his first deployment with the 40th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron at a forward-deployed location. “When you see that plane with empty (weapons) racks, you know you completed your mission.”

“My supervisor always said it’s a great feeling, and it was for me,” he said. “I felt that we actually helped our boys in Afghanistan.”

Master Sgt. James Klimpel, the weapons section superintendent, said the job at home station is all about training. The most intensive training takes place once a month in the load barn for every load crew at home station. They load each munition that they are certified on under the watchful eye of weapons standardization Airmen.

“It’s all timed,” said Sergeant Klimpel, also from Minot. “If they don’t do it within the allotted time, they fail.”

Airman Thames said all that training certainly pays off when it counts.

“This is my first time for everything, particularly actually loading live weapons,” he said. “I did all that training at Minot, but this is the real deal.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jocelyn Rich

Airman 1st Class Marcus Thames moves a joint-direct attack munition that will be loaded on a B-52 Stratofortress. He is a weapons loader with the 40th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron at a forward-deployed location and is from Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

Besides the mission that took out the cave, a second B-52 and several Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt IIs provided close-air support to coalition troops the same day in the vicinities of Bagram and Kandahar without using weapons.

The mission lead on the cave sortie said he feels strongly that the mission here is more than dropping bombs, it is to support the warfighter in ways never imagined.

“Sometimes the desired effect involves lethal kinetic firepower — bombs on target,” he said. “Other times, the desired effect may simply be to deter enemy action by making it clear there’s a fully loaded B-52 ready, willing and able to deliver weapons in a matter of minutes.”

While it may be easier to measure the immediate, tangible effects of a bomb on a target than to measure how many mortar rounds were not fired at coalition ground forces because a B-52 was flying overhead, chance encounters with guys on the ground paint the picture all too well.

“A bomber pilot recently struck up a conversation with a young Army Special Forces Soldier while waiting for airlift,” the lieutenant colonel said. “When the Soldier learned his companion was a bomber pilot who had flown over him in country, his eyes welled up as he shook the pilot’s hand, saying, ‘You may not know it or understand, but when you are overhead, the bad guys don’t shoot at me and my friends.’”

49th TES demonstrates new system

Staff and wire reports

An aircrew of 49th Test and Evaluation Squadron and 53rd Wing's test managers successfully demonstrated a new \$8.6 million avionics system capability for the B-52 Tuesday.

A B-52 from Barksdale launched with Boeing's prototype integrated weapons interface unit that allowed the bomber to release, for the first time, eight 2,000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munitions from the B-52 bomb bay over the Utah Test and Training Range.

The IWIU was developed by Boeing during a two-year sustainment program aimed at replacing the four aging line replaceable units that are currently carried on the wing-mounted B-52 conventional stores pylon.

"The weapon's interface unit that we have right now is becoming obsolete," said Capt. Brian Bartels, 49th TES project officer for the IWIU test.

The benefit of Tuesday's demonstration shows that the prototype IWIU, when fully developed and qualified for production, is capable of replacing the existing LRUs, and as a result, extending the combat role of the B-52.

The test sortie also demonstrated the B-52's capability to increase the number of JDAM weapons the B-52 can carry from 12 to 20, an increase of 60 percent. At this time, there is no existing program to formally pursue this

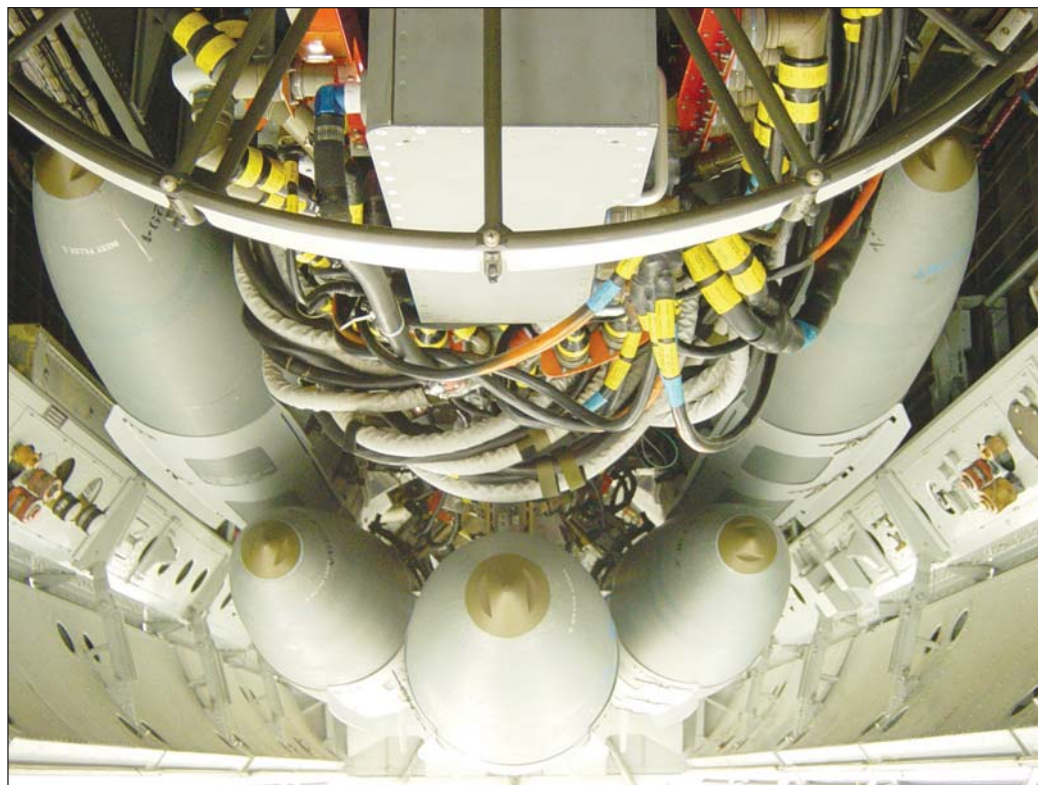


Photo by Capt. Brian Bartels

Joint Direct Attack Munitions are loaded on the weapons rotator in the B-52's bomb bay June 10.

capability, however, the demonstration allowed proof of the concept and provides future risk reduction.

Yet another surprise for the flight was how well it went. Not only was the IWIU part of the test a complete success, all of the ordnance dropped landed well within satisfactory range of each target.

"The mission really couldn't have gone better if we tried harder," Captain Bartels said. "As far as deviations, the weapons came up as planned, the launcher rotated as planned."

49th TES Weapons loader manager, Master Sgt. Danny Skinner, had a massive task of working with

several different groups including representatives from Boeing to help get the system and the weapons loaded on the jet properly; however, the hard work was a success.

"Since this was new, it was a matter of making sure that everybody is reading off the same sheet of music when it comes to what we're doing," he said. "It was a challenge to put it all together and get rid of all of the little 'nit noid' problems. I want to thank the 2d Bomb Wing for all of their help and great support."

Capt. Ronald Wheeler, 49th TES radar navigator for the flight, said the mission's

success was overwhelming.

"Usually we have some sort of deviation we have to work around, but this was just smooth," Captain Wheeler said. "We had beautiful weather, all the weapons went as briefed and everything was just clockwork."

"Though the primary objective of the mission was to check up on this IWIU, to be able to demonstrate proof of concept that not only does it talk to the weapons, but it also will target and launch them successfully was great," he said. "We didn't baby step this, we went straight out and dropped eight weapons, first try, no problems."

OIF veterans share Wingman stories

By Master Sgt. Dee Ann Poole
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. – Sometimes, you don't need to veer far from the beaten path to need a Wingman.

For two Soldiers fighting in Iraq, it was a matter of driving just a few feet when they experienced the true meaning of a Battle Buddy – or Wingman.

Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans Cpl. J.R. Martinez and Spc. B.J. Jackson recently shared their stories with 509ers during a recent base tour here.

Specialist Jackson was injured in downtown Baghdad Aug. 7, 2003, while he and his fellow Iowa National Guard Soldiers were enjoying their first day off in nearly a month. Specialist Jackson was driving a vehicle with two other Soldiers when the vehicle struck a land mine. The group was then immediately hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.

More than four hours passed as the Soldiers fought off the insurgent attack and worked to get Specialist Jackson out of the vehicle and to safety.

"All I did was move the vehicle 6 feet when an explosion stopped us. One-and-a-half months later, I woke up in San Antonio," the Des Moines, Iowa, native said.

The military policeman's



Photo by Master Sgt. Dee Ann Poole

Cpl. J.R. Martinez speaks with base members about the importance of having a Wingman. Corporal Martinez was injured April 5, 2003, while on convoy duty near Karbala in southern Iraq. He received burns on 40 percent of his body.

legs were crushed by the dashboard. He was the only member of his group who was seriously injured. While the other Soldiers fought off the attackers, a Soldier who suffered a broken leg tried to get Specialist Jackson out of the vehicle.

This first Wingman – or Battle Buddy as the Army calls them – wasn't strong enough to pull the 170-pound Soldier from the wreckage. Fortunately, another group of Soldiers was passing by. A captain and another member of the Iowa group helped get Specialist Jackson out of the vehicle.

Specialist Jackson, who arrived at Brooke Army Medical Center Aug. 12 to begin rehabilitation from severe burns and the loss of both legs below the knees, said he's thankful for the two Wingmen.

"A battle buddy will be

there for you in good or bad times," the 23-year-old medically retired Soldier said. "It's a bond. It's a family. There were 124 people in my Iowa unit. We had 14 to 15 fist fights some days, but they were riding together at night, taking care of each other."

Corporal Martinez was injured April 5, 2003, while escorting a convoy near Karbala in southern Iraq. He was driving a Humvee when the incident occurred.

"It was hot that morning. I was looking forward to the end of the day" to escape the heat, Corporal Martinez said. The convoy was stopped shy of the city because there was a possibility of danger and there were people in the group who weren't trained in combat.

"We were told to find a new route around the city. I

went from the rear of the convoy to the front because I had the most powerful Humvee and could provide better protection for the convoy," Corporal Martinez said.

The Soldier said he drove 75 or 100 meters when the front left tire struck a land mine.

"Everyone was ejected but me. I was trapped. Everything was on fire. I was conscious through it. I was burned on 40 percent of my body – head, face, arms, back and hands. I was in the Humvee for 15 or 20 minutes, and I was thinking, 'I'm going to die. There's no way I can survive this. I can't die.' I was screaming and yelling.

"It was loud. But then, my dead sister came to me and it was quiet. She told me I can't die because my mom needed me," said Corporal Martinez, explaining that he was 5 when his sister died.

Shortly after that, the platoon sergeant pulled the corporal from the Humvee. Inhalation damage caused Corporal Martinez to gasp for air.

"I kept asking 'What's wrong with my face? I know there's something wrong with my face.' My platoon sergeant said, 'Don't worry about it. I love you. I love you.' He was feeling my pain. I could hear it in his

Last Block 10 U-2ST departs Beale for upgrade

By Airman 1st Class Candace Romano
9th RW Public Affairs

BEALE AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. – As the diesel air conditioning unit whirs to life, pumping cooling air into the aircraft, crew members from the 9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron rush to their places, conducting operational checks. The pilots suit up in their low-flight harnesses, assisted by members of the 9th Physiological Support Squadron. A member of the 9th Operations Group stands nearby, cross-checking flight plans with the pilots and preparing the chase car for the plane's departure.

In the middle of it all is Aircraft 80-1065, a U-2ST Dragon Lady, in her last moments as a Block 10 aircraft.

Aircraft 1065, the last Block 10, two-seat U-2ST in existence, departed Beale June 2 without fanfare and headed to Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, Calif., for its conversion to a Block 20 aircraft through the Reconnaissance, Avionics and Maintainability Program.

"This marks an end of an era in U-2 Pilot training," said Maj. Rob Creedon, 9th Operations Support Squadron tactics officer. "As the Air Force modernizes its fleet of aircraft worldwide, we must also modernize training aircraft to follow. Today's Air Force pilot training starts students off in modern glass cockpits, and this upgrade allows them a smoother transition into the U-2."

The aircraft was piloted by Major Creedon and Lt. Col. Walt Flint, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron commander, who flew to Palmdale in one hour and 17 minutes.

"So many people have worked on this aircraft and supported its mission here over the years," said Colonel Flint.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Candace Romano

Lt. Col. Walt Flint, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron commander, (bottom) and Maj. Rob Creedon, 9th Operations Support Squadron tactics officer, (top) study their flight plans before takeoff June 2.

"Major Creedon and I felt very privileged to be the pilots who got to fly the last U-2ST Block 10 sortie from Beale."

The cooperative efforts of numerous people from different organizations

● See **BLOCK 10**, page 7

● **OIF, from page 5**

voice,” Corporal Martinez said.

The Dalton, Ga., native said that before the accident, he didn’t like his platoon sergeant. “He was being so hard on me when I first got to my unit. He saw potential I didn’t see. This person I

thought so bad of risked his life to save mine.”

Corporal Martinez, who wears a hat and long sleeves to protect his skin from the sun, said no matter what scars or adversities you’re faced with, you can overcome them with a Wingman.

“You can’t go through it alone. You’ll always need a hand. Always take care of your people. Yes, rank matters and you must show respect, but take care of each other,” the 22-year-old said. “We (B.J. and I) looked death in the eyes and over-

came it. What do you think you can overcome?”

“We’re here to take care of one another, no matter how we get along in our personal life. Don’t say you don’t care what happens to people,” the corporal said.

● **BLOCK 10, from page 6**

at Beale helped support the aircraft in its historic departure.

“Close coordination and teamwork between the 9th Operations Group and the 9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron enabled them to safely and expeditiously launch the aircraft faster than expected,” said Maj. Stan Wilson, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron U-2 aircraft commander and T-38 instructor pilot.

Aircraft 1065 will be undergoing the Block 20 conversion through the R.A.M.P. program at Palmdale for the next six to eight months. The R.A.M.P. program has been in development for several years, and Block 20 U-2s have started to be employed operationally within the last year.

This conversion will upgrade technology from decades ago and allow aircraft to accommodate pilots who need to train in the Block 20 U-2.

“The Block 20 conversion provides enough aircraft to train pilots and meet demands,” said Dr. Coy Cross, 9th Reconnaissance Wing historian. “It takes 1950’s technology and upgrades the aircraft to meet the requirements of the modern Air Force.”

Initial design concepts began in the late 1990s in an effort to reduce maintainability costs for the aging cockpit and to allow for a more ergonomically efficient cockpit.

“The U-2 has advanced through numerous upgrades since I became in-

“This marks the end of an era in U-2 pilot training. As the Air Force modernizes its fleet of aircraft worldwide, we must also modernize training aircraft to follow.”

Maj. Rob Creedon
9th Operations Support Squadron

involved with the program in 1992, but this has by far had the most impact on the sortie to sortie life of the U-2 pilot,” said Major Creedon. “This upgrade has produced the capability for greater pilot situational awareness as well as providing an efficient interface between the pilot and the aircraft.”

The upgrade not only improves conditions for the pilot, but also allows for greater aircraft capabilities.

“Many maintenance and operational procedures are changed and improved,” said Colonel Flint. “The Block 20 U-2 will allow for improved dynamic target retasking capabilities and better overall effectiveness to Time-Sensitive-Targeting requirements. It gives the pilot more data exponentially, and the capability to maintain on-scene battlefield awareness

and provide rapid critical inputs to ISR targeteers and warfighters.”

The conversion will create an improved standard and allow all student pilots to train in the Block 20 U-2 in the future, providing many benefits.

“All U-2 initial qualification training will now be accomplished in the Block 20 aircraft,” said Major Creedon. “The upgrade replaces just about every gauge in the cockpit and re-hosts it on multifunction displays. Monetary savings in maintaining this cockpit versus the older avionics is not the only benefit reaped by this upgrade.”

In its history at Beale, Aircraft 1065 was the first two-seat TR-1B, or Trainer, to deploy to the 17th Reconnaissance Wing, RAF Alconbury, United Kingdom. It has been involved in five overseas deployments, the most deployments of all two-seat U-2 aircraft. After its reconfiguration to U-2ST in August 1995, the aircraft was converted to Block 10 in July 2001.

After its conversion to a Block 20 aircraft, Aircraft 1065 will be returning to Beale in late 2005. Charles Stewart, 9th AMXS, who has been the crew chief for the aircraft since November 2002, will resume his work when it returns.

“For now I’ll work where they need me until she returns,” said Mr. Stewart. “As the crew chief, my name might be on the side of the jet, but she wouldn’t fly without the rest of our crew.”

Air Warrior II tests aircrews and controllers

By 1st Lt. Nathan Broshear
Air Warrior II Public Affairs

A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft from the 354th Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., are participating in a unique training opportunity in the skies over Louisiana. Air Warrior II, a large-scale combat exercise at Fort Polk, La., is challenging Airmen and Soldiers in a high-fidelity battlespace that includes an active enemy force, a local populace simulated by role players, and targets that must be engaged by ground and air assets.

Maj. Joel Hampton, director of operations at the 548th Combat Training Squadron, explained, "Davis-Monthan aircrews are supporting the 10th Mountain Division, 3rd Brigade Combat Team from Fort Drum, N.Y., prior to the Army unit's deployment to Afghanistan."

"For the Army, this is a chance to integrate the same aircraft they'll use in theatre into missions that closely simulate actual combat situations," Major Hampton said. "For the Air Force, we're able to practice working with our Joint Tactical Air Controllers to identify and destroy ground targets during the chaos of battle."

The training at Fort Polk includes nearly 4,000 Army participants who must face a real opposition force comprised of "enemy" Army units. Villages inside the



Senior Airman Stephen Otero

An improvised explosive device detonates near an Army convoy at Fort Polk, La. During this live-fire portion of the exercise, an Army convoy is "attacked" by a simulated enemy and must respond with ground and air assets. Air Force A-10 aircraft from the 354th Fighter Squadron helped to suppress the simulated attack with the direction of Air Force Joint Tactical Controllers embedded with in the 10th Mountain Division, 3d Brigade Combat Team.

training area are populated with approximately 1,200 role players who simulate shopkeepers, politicians and insurgents. Arab-American contractors train role players and help to expose troops to customs and courtesies troops will soon face when they deploy.

Role players dress, speak and act "in character" for the duration of the exercise. Even street signs and graffiti are written on buildings inside "the box" (the term used to describe the exercise area inside Fort Polk) in languages units can expect to see on their deployment. To further the realism, television, radio and

newspapers follow the action so leaders can learn to counter enemy misinformation and propaganda.

The overall goal of the exercise is to prepare Army and Air Force units for urban operations prior to deployment to various contingencies and to meet formal training objectives as outlined by Joint Forces Command in the Joint National Training Capability initiative. The JNTC initiative is a military-wide effort to plan and coordinate joint military training under a coordinated timeline while actively simulating the realities of today's fighting environment.

While participating in

Air Warrior II, aircrews communicate with ground units through Air Force JTACs embedded within the 10th Mountain Division. JTACs are Air Force enlisted members assigned to Army units to control aircraft and assist in targeting during a battle. This elite corp may even wear the newest Army Battle Dress Uniforms (with Air Force rank and insignia) and are often called "battlefield Airmen."

A-10s operate from Barksdale AFB, during Air Warrior II. Their missions, up to 12 per day, are a 20-minute flight south to the Fort

● See **TESTS**, page 9

Thunderbirds won't leave 'roost' without imagery

By 2nd Lt. Pavi Murthy
36th Intelligence Squadron

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. — A pilot from the U.S. Air Force Demonstration Team, the Thunderbirds, stopped by the 480th Intelligence Wing's 36th Intelligence Squadron May 13. Maj. Scottie Zamzow, lead solo for the team, visited squadron members during the team's return here for the Air Power over Hampton Roads Air Show May 13 - 15.

The 36th IS is respon-

sible for many unique missions including providing mission planning imagery to the Thunderbirds demo team.

Imagery analysts explained the entire production process, describing how they transform raw images into a scaled, finished product used for mission planning.

Major Zamzow then demonstrated exactly how the Thunderbirds use the imagery.

Prior to every show, the team uses the imagery to mission plan, designating

landmarks to use during the show for timing purposes. This enhances their precision and helps make the Thunderbirds the premier Air Demonstration Team in the world.

The jets fly at approximately 500 knots with a closure speed of 1000 knots — as low as 100 feet above ground level while operating with less than 3 feet of separation between jets during the maneuvers, said Major Zamzow.

With the help of the imagery, the Thunderbirds complete all of their daring

maneuvers within 100 feet of show center. This translates into their awe-inspiring show occurring right in front of the crowd.

The imagery support provided by the squadron is awesome, said Major Zamzow as he presented the squadron with a signed Thunderbirds lithograph.

The busy show season doesn't allow much practice time at each show site, so the Thunderbirds depend on the imagery from the 36th IS to prepare for every show. In fact, they claim they won't fly without it.

● TESTS, from page 8

Polk area of operations, followed by two hour sorties where they strafe ground targets with their powerful 30-millimeter Gatlin gun.

Part of the exercise takes place over two real towns located just outside Fort Polk. The towns of Leesville and DeRidder, both in Louisiana, opened up their airspace to military aircraft involved in training. JTACs set up on streetcorners and in parking lots with High-mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles and radios to simulate a deployment to a nearby village. While aircraft circle overhead, JTACs challenge aircrews to track vehicles and locate buildings from high above.

For A-10 crews, the opportunity to work with JTACs over an actual city that roughly simulates "hot" zones such as Tikrit and Tallil, Iraq, is invaluable.

This is the only place in the world to get this kind of training," said Capt. Frank Scolaro, the project officer from the 354th FS for the Air Warrior II exercise. "We're able to train over a real town with all of the activity going on —

it's a real challenge."

"The people of Leesville and DeRidder are true patriots," Capt. Scolaro added. "It's great to see a whole community support our military and the global war on terror in this way. They deserve a big thank-you."

While operating over civilian cities, A-10 crews take many safety precautions. "Jets never have ordnance on the aircraft at any time while conducting operations over the population," explained Maj. Richard Collins, commander Detachment 1, 548th CTS at Fort Polk. "We maintain strict altitude limits and safety protocols that we've worked out with the city council and local leadership."

"The goal of this portion of the training is to be able to quickly identify buildings, vehicles and landmarks in an active and diverse area — something we can't simulate on our military ranges," said Major Collins. "JTACs must be able to describe things they see at eye level to someone from a far different vantage point...flying at 450

miles an hour, several thousand feet in the sky."

JTACs must then relay detailed targeting information to aircraft and translate ground unit commander's intent into Air Force jargon. "Headings, distance and GPS coordinates are relayed to the pilot," said Master Sgt. Jeff Eberlan, Detachment 1 superintendent. "But the most important part of a JTACs job is to 'talk' an aircraft onto the target using a mental picture of an object he may or may not be able to see."

During a typical mission, JTACs must carry approximately 55-75 pounds of gear including radios, global positioning system receivers and food while controlling all air assets assigned to patrol a typical area of responsibility.

During Air Warrior II, JTACs not only controlled A-10 Warthogs, but also several B-52 Stratofortresses from the 917th Wing, and a B-2 Spirit from the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo. Other rotations have included most every type of aircraft in the United States and coalition inventory.

'Storm Troopers' keep eye on the sky

By Staff Sgt. Kristina Barrett
2d Bomb Wing Public Affairs

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. – Just saying the words “tornado alley” sends a shiver up any Midwesterners’ spine. Say them to any Airman at the 26th Operational Weather Squadron and it’s like throwing down the gauntlet.

Facing challenging weather is what these troops are all about. The squadron’s area of responsibility covers the south central United States – Texas to Mississippi and the gulf coast to the northern borders of Kansas and Missouri.

One of their primary missions is to provide daily operational and tactical weather support to 68 active duty, guard and reserve Air Force and Army bases, including 16 main operating bases. Forecasting the weather in such a unique and geographically diverse environment is an obstacle they tackle every day with the hopes of besting Mother Nature just one more time.

“The south central U.S. has a wide range of weather,” said Maj. Jonathan Kelly, squadron operations officer. “Hurricanes threatening the coastlines and the desert conditions of west Texas present unique challenges to protecting our assets of people and equipment.”

As one of eight regional weather centers Air Force-wide, the squadron faces these challenges head-on by starting with the basics of training new Airmen who come into the weather career field.

“We have a teaching mission beyond technical school,” said Chief Master Sgt. B.J. Ortner, squadron superintendent. “After eight months in training, Airmen come here to get on-the-job training.”

The Airmen receive technical knowledge and operational experience, said Senior Master Sgt. Lorne



Photo by J. Manny Guendulay

Master Sgt. Chuck Norman, 26th Operational Weather Squadron NCO in charge of Delta Team, has many monitors to keep an eye on the sky over the central continental United States.

McClard, operations superintendent.

“When Airmen leave us, they are fully qualified five-levels,” he said. “Since weather isn’t an exact science, they need the technical and operational experience we provide.”

Airmen are then sent out into the field, which means going to a combat weather team, which is a weather flight attached to an operational support squadron. Weather flights do not “belong” to regional weather centers, but to individual Air Force bases and Army posts. These teams take the forecasts produced by the squadron and tailor them to their specific area and mission.

“We produce thousands of forecast products which we pass to weather teams at individual bases,” Chief Ortner said. “They refine those forecasts based on local conditions and integrate them into specific mission planning and execution.

The squadron not only supplies a glimpse into what the weather will do across a seven-state area, they also provide staff support for 8th Air

Force headquarters.

Due to the nature of the 8th Air Force Global Strike mission, the OWS must provide weather intelligence for anywhere 8th AF assets are currently located and prepare to supply a forecast for worldwide deployments. This means communicating with countless agencies to get a weather forecast the base can use.

“Since we’re not at the actual base, we’re not there to step outside and see what the weather is like,” said Tech. Sgt. John Rosario, regional operations manager. “Part of the challenge is painting a picture of what can happen at their base. We get to know our customer and we know what products they need.”

The goal for forecasters is to get themselves and the base they are communicating with looking at the same weather. Once this happens, the 26th OWS can pull from their regional forecasts and tap the other regional centers to give their customer a “big picture” look at what’s headed their way.